

the premise of the other side, the fundamental flaws in the belief that by government spending, we are going to get out of this problem.

Now, we recognize there is spending we need to do right now, in intelligence gathering, in defense, in homeland security. It is critical. It is increases. We all voted for it and we are going to keep voting for it. But that is all the more reason to be cautious on the other areas that have nothing to do with the threat to our Nation, with the attack that we suffered.

We need to be cautious there and rein in the excessive tendencies, so we can at some point in the near future get back to balancing this budget, get back to retiring some debt. But, most of all, in the meantime, we have got to get this economy going. We have too many people out of work, and that is our obligation.

Our responsibility is to create an environment where folks can get back to work, where our economy can flourish, where businesses can hire new workers. We started that process. In the House we passed a bill that will move us in that direction. The President supports our bill. The President, in fact, called for doing more than we did in the House. I wish we had. But at least we moved in that direction, significantly. And, yet, in the other chamber, we have not a bill on the Senate floor, we have no meaningful progress. It is really a disgrace.

I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding. I think that last point is the most important. We need to do a stimulus package, and the inability of the other body to even consider in debate a package is very disappointing. We do not help the workers that are unemployed today. We do not put in place a package of stimulus items that will help ensure that this is a short downturn and not a very deep downturn. And the third thing, I think, is that it is difficult to factor in, but it will send a psychological message that we are ready to move on, and that we are about focusing on domestic issues, as well as waging a war on the other side of the world; that we have not forgotten about the issues at home.

So, these three items coming out of the House and moving forward, I think, speaks well for our ability. It may not be a perfect bill, but it is a whole lot better than doing absolutely nothing and not even being willing to bring a bill to the floor for debate.

If our bill is not perfect, let the other body develop its own version and move forward and bring it to conference, so that by Christmas this President, this country and the American people will have a stimulus package. That is the way the process is supposed to work. But the sheer inaction as our economy struggles is totally unacceptable.

I thank my colleague for inviting me here.

Mr. TOOMEY. I thank the gentleman from Michigan very much for participating in the discussion tonight and everything he added to that.

Mr. SHADEGG. If I could just briefly as we summarize here kind of reiterate an important point in this debate, because too often things get politicized and we miss the issue, some people have pointed out that we have already agreed in the House bill there needs to be an extension of unemployment benefits and health care benefits. We need to take care of people who have already lost their jobs.

But the other debate that goes on is a rejection of any kind of tax relief. I think it is important for the listening audience to remember that under both Democrat and Republican presidents, President Kennedy, a Democrat in the sixties, President Reagan, a Republican in the eighties, when we cut taxes, when they had become excessive and we cut taxes, we stimulated the economy, and, as President Kennedy, a Democrat, said, a rising tide lifts all boats. It put all Americans back to work. It stimulated the economy for all Americans.

Every time I hear this phrase that tax cuts are just for the rich or tax cuts for the rich, it enrages me, because the reality is the way to stimulate this economy is to give all Americans some tax relief. That is what we were proposing to do, that is what will stimulate the economy, and that ought to be a part of the package and will benefit every single American, not just one sector, as President Kennedy said.

Mr. TOOMEY. Well, the gentleman is exactly right. I would just conclude with one other thought. You know, many of the fundamentals for our economy are actually quite hopeful. There is reason to believe that we could come out of this and we could have a return to some real prosperity relatively soon if you look at some of those fundamentals.

Inflation is extremely low, our dollar is strong, and it is very clear that all around the world people have enormous confidence in the dollar. Our productivity levels are at an all time high. Never before have American workers been so enormously productive. Our national debt as a percentage of our GDP has declined dramatically, from 50 percent of our economic output around 1995 down to about a third today. It has also declined in absolute dollar terms.

So these fundamentals are strong. If we lower this tax burden now, resist the urge for wasteful, excessive and inappropriate spending, and lower the tax burden that is acting as a barrier between people who could get this economy moving again, we will do that exactly, and the folks who are out of work today can get back to work.

We have done our part in the House. We have taken an important and enormous step forward. I am urging my colleagues in the Senate to do likewise. It is long past time. It has been over 11 weeks since the terrible attack that ac-

celerated the decline in our economy. It is overdue to have the kind of economic stimulus that we all need.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KIRK). The Chair will remind all Members that it is improper in debate to characterize Senate action or inaction.

FAST TRACK PROFITEERING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I will be joined today by several Members. I am so far joined by my good friend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), who in his several years in Congress has been a leader on trade issues and fighting for American jobs and American workers and raising labor standards and environmental standards, both in this country and throughout the developing world and in other nations around the world.

Before we talk about fast track, and that is what this special order is about, as some of us just could not resist listening to the last speakers who, already in the space of 11 months of a Republican administration with a Republican House of Representatives and formerly a Republican Senate, have already, through their huge tax cuts for the rich, have already brought on to our government a deficit. We had several years of positive, good budget situations. We are now already spending back into deficit because of these huge tax cuts for the rich.

Second, we are already in a recession. We have had a Republican President since January 20th. There are 1 million fewer jobs, industrial, manufacturing jobs in this country than there were a year ago. And when we talk like this, talk about tax cuts for the rich, my Republican friends love to say we are engaging in class warfare. But the fact is that every day in this chamber as Republicans try to cut spending on unemployment compensation, on health care, on Medicare cuts, on cuts that people in this country that need help would benefit from, that they make those cuts, at the same time they cut taxes on the rich, they commit class warfare in this society; when they are hurting working people and hurting the poor and helping their wealthiest contributors and wealthiest friends, whether they are the drug companies, or whether they are some of the wealthiest people like Rupert Murdoch and others that they seem to care so much about. So in other words, Mr. Speaker, they so often commit class warfare every day in this body. All we do is point out they are doing it, and they just seem to bristle from it.

Mr. Speaker, on the evening of September 11, several gas stations in my